

The Christian

No. 265

Edited by
KATHLEEN BLISS

News-Letter

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DEAR MEMBER,

Holidays during these summer months are in the minds of all of us. This matter of holidays is one that needs the application of some Christian thinking as much as any other human activity.

HOLIDAYS

There are now fifteen million wage earners who, under the "Holidays with Pay" Act of 1938, have at least a week's holiday in the year. The inadequacy of the accommodation to meet this huge new demand has already been commented on in the press. A further question is how many of these fifteen million and their dependants know what they want to do with a holiday.

There are two quite different conceptions of the holiday, each with a long history. One is the medieval "holy day," spent by the populace at the fair in a nice combination of business and pleasure, with crowds, noise, fun, colour and excitement. It is not just coincidence that the most successful promotor of the "holiday in a crowd," Mr. Butlin, was born a showman. He made his way to fame by applying to a week or fortnight's holiday all the techniques of the fun of the fair.¹ A phenomenal amount of organization and ingenuity has to be expended on keeping up the "fun of the fair" atmosphere for a week without letting it go bad on its participants.

The other type of holiday is based on the desire not to get together but to get away, to travel, to see the world and to enjoy natural beauty. Those who want this type of holiday find it more and more difficult to come by, and no doubt many who in principle favour the expansion of privilege from the few to the many watch with trepidation lest their secret and hidden retreat should suddenly become popularized and its pleasures lost. Such holidays were originally the holidays of the well-to-do. The enjoyment of rustic pleasures and natural beauty by townspeople was an eighteenth-century invention. But the taste for such holidays can be found in all corners of society. Saving up in order to spend a precious week out of the country has become an incentive to work overtime with a growing number of individuals in every class of job. There are,

¹ See Kenneth Adams' illuminating and entertaining article in *Pilot Papers*. Vol. 1, No. 2. Pilot Press. 3s. 6d. published quarterly.

for example, hundreds of men working in the Cardiff shipyards who, just before the war, were saving hard in order to get a continental holiday. Several organizations in this country have attempted with considerable success to bring the second type of holiday within the reach of the weekly wage earner, and at the same time to provide in modified form some of the advantages of the first. Hence the holiday camps run with such success by the Co-operative Holidays Association, the Holiday Fellowship and the Workers' Travel Association, who before the war provided between them for over 100,000 people every year. The Camping Club has for forty years protected the rights and attempted to improve the standards of those half million people who every year take car or bicycle, tent or caravan, and camp in the open.

Every year the prospects for the free individual become steadily rosier—camping, hiking, motoring, cruising—all these and thousands of other types of holiday will improve in their attractiveness as time goes on. As they do so, so the prospects for the married couple with young children become gloomier by contrast. The mere fact of children rules them out of many pleasures. The expense would be prohibitive for most. The solution towards which we seem to be drifting is that of splitting up the family for holiday purposes. As soon as they can take some care of themselves, youth organizations will give the children a very good time, and the mother and father can, if they still have the taste for it, go back to the things they so much enjoyed in their youth. One or two organizations made strenuous efforts before the war to provide holiday homes for families, where the mother could get some relief from constant housekeeping. Much of the little accommodation which they possessed for this purpose is still unreleased.

Some strenuous action ought to be taken to enable families to spend holidays together which are *real* holidays even for the mother. It is not just by getting away from each other in the hope that when they return some of the frayed nerves will have been soothed, that members of a family get on more happily together. The value of the family holiday is that, released from all the pressures of the factory hooter, the school bell and the thousand and one things in modern life which dictate the life of the family, people may have the freedom to plan a piece of their own lives and the opportunity of seeing each other in a new light in a different environment. Given these circumstances, the family which is losing its cohesion and its joy in living can often set out on a new lease of life.

Holiday making and all the saving, scheming, planning which go to it, is an art. People do not have an instinct which tells them how to make a successful holiday—they pick up ideas from others, improve on them, learn by experience. Unless, therefore, those who

have the art set about sharing it widely and those who have the means (including government departments with their surplus hostels) set about providing suitable accommodation, the way lies open for a terrific commercial racket in mass holidays for the masses.

CHRISTIAN PROTEST

News-Letter No. 263 brought a considerable correspondence which we shall take up when we publish a further Supplement on politics. One letter may be quoted now. The writer says :—

“ It does seem to me that we Christians as a whole, apart from all questions of actual political party, show something which amounts to escapism, or moral cowardice in our attitude to anything political. This was brought home to me yesterday evening when I happened to become involved in an anti-bread rationing demonstration and put forward the question : ‘ Would they let the Continent starve ? ’ The immediate replies were : ‘ Would they do the like for us ? ’ and ‘ We have suffered enough, it is their turn now. ’ I did not use the opportunity to put forward the Christian challenge, somehow one would feel a prig—but is it possible that Christians ought to be more ready to speak ? Normal respectable Christians avoid becoming involved in such things.

“ The present drift from Christianity, on which so much has been written, seems to be largely an unconscious drift : e.g. in queues and the like one is still met with the confident assumption that departed relations have promptly become angels. It might for this reason be a good thing if Christians actively put forward arguments in public, to remind people that religion has to do with some other things than the removal of innumerable grandparents from pubs to the seventh heaven.

“ My point is, ought normal Christians to make their voices heard in crowds at the risk of becoming involved in unseemly altercations or retain their dignity at all costs ? There is a pull both ways all the time. Does one avoid such doubtful meetings or not ? Local Padres, for instance, of any denomination are almost never seen at such things.

“ I would apologize for this long letter were it not that I expect it is partly these letters from puzzled correspondents which enable you to keep abreast of your readers’ thinking as you always do.”

To this may be added an anecdote told us by another News-Letter reader who was present at the meeting of a local political party in a working class district, at which candidates were being selected for election to the Borough Council. One of the selected candidates told the meeting that if he were elected he would stand and act as a Christian, and outlined a few of the matters on which he would take a definite stand. He met with unqualified support.

It is by the courageous action of individuals much more than by resolutions of religious bodies that changes for good can be brought about in public affairs. It has come to our knowledge that one of our readers who is a director of a company protested strongly at a meeting of the Board when it was proposed to declare a dividend of thirty per cent. His colleagues seemed to think that he was mad. Why should not the shareholders take thirty per cent out of the business if they wanted to? The company in question pays low wages and has no pension scheme and no sickness benefit. The motion to reduce the dividend received no support. But the Christian battle is a never-ending struggle and success or failure in one round is neither here nor there. The point is that opportunities for the Christian conscience to assert itself are ready to hand for those who have eyes to see, and the courage to seize them.

CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGE

The Bishop of Hongkong writes: "Some angel sent me the Christian News-Letter with the Berggrav-Niemöller St. Peter-at-Calvin sermons (C.N.-L. No. 256). He is quite right that the Churches which have suffered ought to be thought of as 'privileged' Churches. The Churches in Norway, Germany, China and Japan are privileged Churches because they have been 'in heaven', drawn there by the inescapable reality of sin and of God."

Side by side with the experiences of the Churches on the continent of Europe we may set the following account that has reached us of the Churches in Manchuria after fourteen years of Japanese occupation, followed by some eighty days of Russian occupation.

"The only one of the hospitals we were able to see in action was Mukden. No electricity, no water, or except what was carried, a great proportion of the bedding gone, very under-staffed as to nurses, and yet every bed (339 in all) was occupied, and the patients looked clean, comfortable and happy. One member of the British Red Cross—a doctor—who accompanied us from Tientsin, remarked 'This is the cleanest hospital I have seen anywhere in China.' We could not help noticing the hands of the nurses, some of them still in bandages, others scarred. They and many of the doctors suffered from frozen hands due to working in unheated wards and siderooms through the extreme winter cold.

"A high tribute is due to certain Japanese Christian pastors who ran big risks to help the Chinese Churches. Now it is the turn of the Chinese Christians to help their Japanese brethren and they are doing it. The National Christian Council of China hopes to make some relief funds available to assist in the good work."

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen Bliss

THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG WORKERS IN INDUSTRY

By **MARJORIE REEVES**

Why do people work? How can they be made to work? Is there really any other motive for working than the pay packet? These, of course, are not new questions, but they are exercising our minds particularly at the moment for obvious reasons. We have *got* to find a more fundamental motive for work than the pay packet; we did it in the war, but can we in the peace?

If this problem of the meaning of work applies throughout the industrial field, how crucially important is it with regard to young workers! Employers are well aware of it; they know that the number of juvenile workers is diminishing, and that, with many competing for their services, boys and girls are choosing distributive and luxury trades rather than staple industries. Work that is dirty or heavy is avoided, whilst many change jobs frequently and show little sticking power or pride in their work. The industrialist asks: "How can I attract juveniles into my works and how can I train them to work when I get them there?"

GOING OUT TO WORK

But, it will be objected, boys and girls are not just industrial fodder! We ought, of course, to be fighting hard for the principle that up to eighteen the experience of all juveniles must be weighed for its educational not for its productive value. The young worker is necessary to industry. But is industry necessary to him? I believe that it is. The core of personal development is contained in the process by which the growing individual gradually accepts the idea that he must do a proper job of work in the adult world. Thus any attempt to focus attention on "education for leisure" misses the fundamental point that work and leisure are intimately connected, as obverse and reverse of one life. The hard central experiences of making a choice which narrows possibilities—his first choice may not be final but it ought to be the beginning of the end of those delightful dreams of engine-driving one day and air-piloting the next—and of holding down a job which may not be dodged, form an education which, in the very nature of things, cannot be given in the withdrawn school community but only in the real world of the adult community.

We may very properly feel that the young ought not to be pushed into this stage until sixteen or after, but come it must, and

the main responsibility for it must rest, not on the professional teachers of whole or part-time schooling, but on the ordinary working adults who will have to initiate them into their first jobs. These educators are many—employers, personnel and works managers, foremen, charge hands, ordinary workers—and attitudes among them vary enormously. Some frankly are concerned with nothing but the scarcity of juvenile labour, but during the visits on which this paper is based, I was struck by the instinctively educational point of view I met in a number of managers and foremen.

SCHEMES FOR TRAINING JUVENILES

Since 1940 the development of training schemes has been phenomenal. The reasons given for some of these are most illuminating: “to attract scarce young workers”; “to give the worker factory-sense and make him machine-minded”; “to teach correct movements for a particular job”; “to produce semi-skilled labour in a short time”; “to ensure a flow of skilled craftsmen and to meet the serious shortage of supervisory staff”; “to replace the haphazard method of pitch-forking entrants into jobs by a more scientific selection according to aptitude.” Here industry is necessarily thinking of its own needs. But one also meets the following reasons for educational schemes: “we were horrified at the low educational level of entrants”; “industry should play an active part in the broader educational development as well as the vocational training of young citizens”; “our aim is to make them think and act for themselves, thus counteracting the sluggish habit of mind resulting from very monotonous jobs”; “one remembered one’s own introduction into industry and tried to provide something better.” Thus the needs of industry and the education of the young do meet in these training schemes.¹

THE AIM AND SCOPE OF TRAINING SCHEMES

It will be obvious that over the whole field of industry training schemes for juveniles will vary widely in aim and scope. Generally speaking, they may contain at least four different elements: (1) initiation including training in machine-mindedness, instruction in safety measures, explanation of factory rules, wage calculations, welfare provision, etc.; (2) testing of aptitude and training in a particular skill; (3) higher technical instruction; (4) further general education.

(a) *Initiation*

In the old days a boy starting work with his father received a natural initiation, and in many small firms the fatherly oversight of older men still serves the same purpose. But the entry into great

¹ See also the pamphlet published by the Recruitment and Training department of the Cotton Board, *Learning and Liking It*. 81 Fountain Street, Manchester 2.

modern works is altogether another matter ; its intricacies confuse, its size stultifies, whilst the haphazard way in which so many juveniles are chucked into its maelstrom is not only bad for the person but makes for inefficiency in work. The old hit or miss tactics "involved shouting above the noise and rattle of machinery. . . . Besides causing great discouragement and possible unhappiness to juveniles it meant that they did not get the practice and experience necessary to equip them for standing up to the hustle and bustle of the weaving shed. Too often they were utilized for doing odd jobs . . . whilst the weavers kept up production. . . . Only the bright juveniles with a flair for weaving made progress." The war, with its influx of new and unfamiliar labour, focussed attention for the first time on this problem of "acclimatizing the worker to the factory"—an essential *personal* problem of adjustment. Increasingly, therefore, large firms are developing proper "initiation schemes." Under these the entrants are usually, though not always, placed in a "school" for widely varying periods (from two days upwards), during which time they have talks on the industry and its products, safety measures, hygiene and protective clothing, methods of wages calculation and insurance, welfare and amenities, etc., and also go round the works on tours of inspection. Such schemes clearly serve the purposes of industry, but when the aim is defined as "to give a bird's eye view of the factory," one sees that emphasis is laid on the *person* and his grasp of meaning rather than on the *hand*. For the making of a person an understanding of the job is the first essential : the new recruit needs, therefore, two things—an individual to whom to turn, and an explanation of the pattern of work. Whether this be the personnel manager himself or a selected supervisor or instructor, he must have time and inclination to answer questions and ability to inspire confidence. As for the pattern of work, something of the whole structure of the factory and its processes, placing the job on which the entrant will start within its setting as a part within a coherent whole, must be explained at once. This seems best done by a tour of all departments, from raw materials to the finished article where possible, an examination of a sample of the factory's best product, pointing out the part the youngster will play in producing it. Some firms maintain that experience as an errand boy around the factory is the best introduction, but one doubts if the runabout necessarily learns much.

(b) *Testing Aptitude and Training in a Special Skill.*

An essential part of some training schemes is the testing of aptitudes and selection for particular jobs or crafts. Again, the double objectives of increased efficiency and greater personal satisfaction go together, but far too few firms have grasped this point. Within many industries there is still scope for variety of aptitude

and clearly the proper selection for the job is vital to the development of the young worker. Yet in many cases the placing is still entirely haphazard. I was told by a teacher in a Boot-and-Shoe school that there was considerable scope for different skills, that at present selection for jobs was almost entirely fortuitous, and that he himself was devising aptitude tests to help towards the better placing of entrants. On the other hand, there are some very fine craft-selection schools, as, for instance, one in an electrical engineering works which gives all its boys a month on each of the six main crafts, and at the end apprentices them to one in the light of the careful records kept. In other cases, whilst there is no definite system of craft selection, care is taken to see that youngsters learn all the different processes within one shop, or that a very monotonous, unskilled job is broken by a spell on a more skilled process. But far too seldom is there any coherent scheme of selection.

Some training is very narrowly directed towards the acquisition of a particular skill, and generally consists in breaking down a process of dexterity into its component movements. A good example of this is a "linking school" in a hosiery factory. Here the requirements of an exacting process for which it had been difficult to recruit adequately, have been met by training selected girls in a separate school on a set of cleverly designed and graded jigs which train the manual dexterity needed. The needs of the industry are met, for efficient linkers are produced far more quickly than by the old haphazard method of learning on the job, but the training has also been shown to have significance for the worker. In the case of two trainees who had been thrown out as misfits and were suffering from a bad sense of inferiority, the instructor noticed that at the end of the course they were taking greater pride in personal appearance and had gained considerably in confidence. As several schemes emphasize, the mere fact of being able to enter the adult workshop, conscious that you have learnt your job thoroughly, is of very great importance. Obviously, by itself, such education is far too limited, but as the core of a wider training the proper mastery of a skill is a significant element in the young worker's education.

(c) Further Technical Education, and (d) Further General Education

In the case of the other two types of training—the more continuous schemes for technical or general education—there is a marked tendency to set the two types one against the other, or to put them in two water-tight compartments. Any discussion on the education of young workers leads to an argument between the "vocational" school of thought, maintaining that industry is only concerned with the increased efficiency of the "hand," and the "general," holding that industry needs people with a higher level

of general education. Fundamentally, in the making of a person, vocational and general aspects of education interlock inextricably. For a time (at least until he is "browned off") work is probably one of the most vital and significant experiences to the juvenile in industry—more so to the boy, perhaps, than the girl; it must be seen, therefore, as the heart of his personal education. Few working boys and girls seem to be keen on further general education in vacuo; where a well-meaning firm puts them to school in English and arithmetic they are noticeably apathetic. But many of them are very keen to learn in order to get on, and have a strong curiosity about lots of things relating to the works. I found the difference in atmosphere between a craft-selection workshop and a class doing English in a works school most marked. Writing essays about sunsets may mean nothing, but keeping a note-book in which to record weekly the processes learnt and the results achieved, can mean a great deal.

THE CULTURE OF AN INDUSTRY

If this unreal distinction between general and technical training could be abandoned, a great chance opens before industrialists to make an important and imaginative contribution to the education of the next generation of citizens. We need comprehensive training schemes for *all* young workers in industry which give (1) real craft-selection and the satisfaction of mastering a skill properly (even if only a machine skill), (2) a training in intellectual skills arising out of practical work, e.g. reading and following instructions, recording results in written form, making mathematical calculations, using scientific instruments, understanding diagrams, cross-sections, and plans, (3) an opening up of all the further implications of the industry, a training which will be in part that of the imagination. There is no great industry which has not got a fascinating background of knowledge. It is this *culture of the industry* which must be presented to the young worker through films, exhibitions, lectures, scientific experiments and other forms which will appeal to the imagination. It includes the geography of its raw materials and final markets, its historical evolution, inventions and scientific background, its economies and so forth. This culture of the industry is admirably presented by some large firms and some technical colleges to which they send their juveniles. But in far too many cases these wider ranges are only open to the promising who are designed for skilled jobs or supervisory staff. This associates further knowledge with the "get on" motive, and carries the implication that the lower grades do not need understanding. Only a few can rise, but all ought to receive the opportunity to understand as much as they possibly can about their work. Clearly some will be more capable than others of absorbing this cultural background, and obviously

schemes for further technical education will still be needed for some, but *all the young—however unskilled the job for which they are fitted—have a right to enter into their work at the highest possible level of personal participation.* Moreover, we shall not get the true social motive in work which we are seeking until this is recognized.

To work out such schemes needs imagination and insight into the meaning of education. More advanced courses belong naturally to the technical college, but where should this basic training for all be carried out? I do not propose to examine in detail the County College *v.* Works School controversy. The fact is that the County Colleges will not be here for some time, and in any case they cannot be a substitute for educative experience within the factory. If the County College will have a very wide educational task, the Works will always have its specific one—that of educating the young through their work. Where the district has certain staple industries, the County College will almost certainly give some of the background, but I believe there will also be a vital place for training schemes in the factory. There will still be so much that ought to be learnt either in the special school of the big firm, or through the educational schemes which some smaller firms are adopting now, by which all the juveniles in one industry are drawn together from a district for joint classes, often in the technical college. There are some interesting experiments in such courses for unskilled juveniles going forward in technical colleges now. Finally, some of this education through the job must always be done in the works itself by one of the people specially concerned with juveniles. The ideal to work for is one whole day in the County College, and another half day's educational work connected with the job and embedded within a coherent training scheme.

WHO SHOULD TEACH?

There is widespread agreement that for the adolescent at work the most successful teacher is usually not the orthodox educationalist but the craftsman-turned-teacher. This is true in technical colleges and works schools alike. The difficulty is that the ordinary teacher has the technique, but the craftsman has the experience the adolescent admires. Where the L.E.A. seconds teachers to works schools they need to get some industrial experience; where craftsmen are put on to instruct they usually need some training in teaching. It is interesting, however, to observe how instinctively some good workmen become teachers and what a pride they take in this responsibility.

It follows from this that the social education given by the workshop group is of supreme importance. A juvenile can be made or marred as a person by the atmosphere of the shop in which he

chances to land. Too often the amount of actual training he gets depends on whether the man with whom he is placed is competent and patient, or incompetent and impatient. Eager to become a man, the adolescent rapidly absorbs the habits, attitudes and moral standards of the workmen round him. With this experience in mind many training schemes rightly stress the importance of placing juveniles in a special school or "nursery shop" or special bay of the main shop. The choice of the men and women who will be their teachers in the craft is of crucial importance: such people must be given a sense of the responsibility of their work; they need a status appropriate to it (e.g. ranking as a member of staff) and proper recognition in terms of wages.

The question of piece-work comes up here. Every one agrees that for the juvenile himself piece-work is a disastrous system and never ought to be allowed. Many go further and say that it militates against his proper training if his instructor is on piece rates too. "In a workroom the emphasis is on production, not on learning. The operatives are usually on piece-work and a learner may be a nuisance. In any case he interferes with production by reducing the efficiency of a worker already skilled. Under a scheme of systematic training *the emphasis is on learning and the teacher has no other interest.*"

The influence of foremen is also of very great importance in establishing right or wrong attitudes among young workers, and it was pointed out to me that the way the management treats the foremen, and what it expects from them will largely determine the manner in which they deal with the juveniles under them. Ultimately it is the general attitude of all the workers and of the firm itself which will most deeply influence the young.

WHY WORK? THE FUNDAMENTAL AND UNANSWERED QUESTION

This brings us back to the fundamental question of what incentives are offered to the young to work. There is a terrible legacy from the past to be overcome. Again and again when one tries to talk of social motive in work, the ogre of unemployment appears. For most boys the first thing learnt in the shop is how to diddle the management, and there is little desire to learn a job properly if it will only benefit the firm. A backward boy, when taught how to save leather in cutting out shoe-patterns, replied quickly enough: "And put 9d. in the boss's pocket? Not on your life!" There is a steady urge on the part of parents to get their children into clean jobs, as near black-coated as possible, and, above

all, *safe*. Thus the chief incentive offered to the young in training is the prospect of getting on. But, as already remarked, comparatively few can rise: though no accurate estimates at present exist, it seems likely that the needs of industry must inevitably keep in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs a large group whose intelligence might have carried them to more satisfying work. Many firms in their training schemes are already fumbling towards the new kind of incentive which we need to set before these young workers—a sense of pride and worthwhileness, if not in individual craftsmanship, in the achievement of the work-group and the firm.

The building up of this new motive is above all things important. The main point I have been trying to make is that to do this *we must teach the young worker, not as little as he needs to know to perform an unskilled operation, but as much as he can absorb as a person about the implications of his work*. We must meet the demands of the intelligence and the need of the person to grasp the meaning of that in which he is called to be a part, if we are to look for a true social motive in work.

Finally, we need the training of the imagination to see work, not in terms of fat profits for shareholders and thin wages for workers, but as services rendered to the community with proper recompense. But it is a betrayal of the young to inculcate such a doctrine unless it really corresponds to the facts of industrial organization. Can we at present honestly say to the youngster: "Your work is for the service of those who most need it"? This issue of the meaning and purpose of work is the fundamental problem to be attacked.

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